

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MILI, XT, NATO

SUBJECT: SECDEF VIEWS ON DEFENSE - LISAGOR ARTICLE

PETER LISAGOR ARTICLE IN KANSAS CITY STAR ON SEPTEMBER 4
CONTAINED GOOD BRIEF EXPOSITION OF SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S
VIEWS ON DEFENSE NEEDS. ARTICLE QUOTED BELOW IN ITS
ENTIRETY. IT OCCURS TO US THAT AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD MIGHT
WISH TO USE THIS ARTICLE IN DISCUSSION WITH OTHER
PERMREPS NOT ONLY TO RE-EMPHASIZE DOMESTIC PRESSURES
BUT ALSO TO EMPHASIZE NECESSITY FOR STALWART DEFENSE
ACTIONS ON PART OF EUROPEANS.

BEGIN TEXT. WASHINGTON--JAMES R. SCHLESINGER,
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, IS NEW AT HIS JOB IN TERMS
OF TITLE AND TENURE. BUT HE KNOWS AS MUCH ABOUT THE
DEFENSE BUDGET AS ANYONE IN TOWN, HAVING MONITORED
DEFENSE SPENDING AS A BUDGET BUREAU EXPERT SINCE 1969.
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THE 44-YEAR-OLD HARVARD PHI BETA KAPPA HAS HELD

ENOUGH OTHER TOP JOBS IN THE ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING CHAIRMAN OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION AND DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, TO SPEAK WITH UNCOMMON ASSURANCE AND BLUNTNESS ABOUT POTENTIAL ENEMIES LURKING IN THE CONGRESSIONAL AND BUREAUCRATIC WOODS.

SCHLESINGER APPARENTLY IS READY TO TAKE ON CRITICS OF PENTAGON SPENDING IN CONGRESS IN PLAIN LANGUAGE, TO WIT: "THAT THE DEFENSE BUDGET IS DRAINING OFF FUNDS FOR DOMESTIC PROGRAMS IS A LOT OF BUNK."

SCHLESINGER TOLD A GROUP OF REPORTERS HERE THAT A "MASSIVE SHRINKAGE -- PERHAPS TOO MUCH" HAS OCCURRED IN DEFENSE SPENDING, "AND WE OUGHT TO AGREE ON KEEPING BOOKS WITHOUT SELF-DECEPTION."

HIS CHIEF CONTENTION IS THAT THE 1969 PENTAGON BUDGET WAS 50 PER CENT HIGHER THAN THE \$78-BILLION FIGURE TODAY IN REAL TERMS. "AND IN REAL TERMS," HE ADDED, "WE'RE OPERATING AT A LOWER LEVEL THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE BEFORE THE KOREAN WAR."

SCHLESINGER CALLED IT "AN ENCHANTING ILLUSION" TO BELIEVE THAT HUGE CUTS CAN BE MADE IN THE BUDGET WITHOUT CUTTING SUBSTANTIALLY INTO MUSCLE. THE CIVILIAN DEFENSE CHIEF DEFENDED THE PRESENT FORCE LEVELS IN WESTERN EUROPE ON THE GROUNDS THAT "IF YOU HAVE A PERMANENT COMMITMENT, AS WE DO TO NATO, YOU CAN'T COME UP WITH A NOVEL FORCE STRUCTURE EVERY YEAR." HE SAID THE CURRENT TROOP LEVEL MAINTAINS THE BALANCE BETWEEN NATO AND WARSAW PACT FORCES, AND THAT A CHANGE IN IT WOULD BE DETERMINED BY NEGOTIATIONS ON MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTION BETWEEN THE US AND RUSSIA OPENING OCT. 30.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID, HE WAS "SATISFIED" THAT THE NATION'S ALLIES WERE MOVING "IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION." THEY SPEND AN AGGREGATE OF \$35 BILLION A YEAR ON DEFENSE AND PROVIDE 85 TO 90 PERCENT OF THE AIR FORCE, HE SAID. HE CONCEDED THEIR VIGOR IS IN PART BECAUSE OF THEIR FEAR THE UNITED STATES WILL WITHDRAW SUBSTANTIAL FORCES IF THEY DRAG THEIR FEET.

SCHLESINGER SAID THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DETENTE WITH THE SOVIETS HASN'T LED TO A REDUCED MILITARY UNCLASSIFIED

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BUDGET. IT CONTINUES TO RISE AT A RATE OF 5 PER CENT A YEAR, HE NOTED. THE RUSSIANS SEE NO INCONSISTENCY IN THIS, HE SAID.

"HISTORICALLY THE DEMOCRACIES HAVEN'T BEHAVED WELL IN THE ABSENCE OF A CLEAR, OVERT THREAT," HE SAID. THE RUSSIANS HAVE A "MAILED FIST NOW ENCASED IN A VELVET GLOVE," HE ADDED. "WE CAN TALK ABOUT THE BEAUTY AND THE TEXTURE OF THE VELVET GLOVE, BUT MY

RESPONSIBILITY IS TO TALK ABOUT THE MAILED FIST."

SCHLESINGER SAID HE WASN'T DISCOURAGED EITHER BY THE SOVIET BUILDUP OR BY ITS DEVELOPMENT OF THE MULTI-WARHEAD MISSILE (MIRV). HE SAID THE RUSSIAN MIRV WAS "SEVERAL YEARS FROM BEING OPERATIONAL." HOWEVER, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT AFTER THE MIRV HAS BEEN FLIGHT-TESTED, IT WOULD MAKE THE SECOND ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS ON STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS MORE DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS OF VERIFYING THE EXISTENCE AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE WEAPON.

ON THE ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY, SCHLESINGER SAID:
"NOBODY CAN GUARANTEE THAT VOLUNTARISM WILL WORK. BUT WE'RE GOING TO MAKE A DAMN GOOD TRY. IF MONTH AFTER MONTH, WE SEE A SHORTFALL (IN ENLISTMENTS) ... WE WOULD THEN HAVE TO COME TO THE RELUCTANT CONCLUSION THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO SEEK RENEWED DRAFT AUTHORITY."
END TEXT.

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